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REVIEWS OF RECENT LITERATURE.

ANTHROPOLOGY.

Social Organization of the Kwakiutl Indians.¹— The results of the investigations made by Dr. Boas during the last ten or twelve years among the Indians of the Northwest coast have been published in the reports of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, in the *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, and in government reports and elsewhere in this country. The present account of the social organization and the secret societies of the Kwakiutl tribe is one of the most valuable papers in the series. The Jessup Expeditions, which Dr. Boas last year led in person, are again at work in that region, and we may expect to receive a final and complete account of these coast tribes at an early day.

It is generally known that these people form, as Dr. Boas states, a distinct cultural group; they have been isolated to some extent by mountain barriers from the tribes of the interior.

This isolation, however, has not been so complete as to prevent the introduction of myths from foreign sources. As elsewhere, culture and environment are closely related. The contour of the coast, indented by fiords and protected by islands, has favored the development of navigation. Fish and marine mammalia abound in the sheltered waters. A mild climate of extreme humidity has produced a plant growth of almost tropical luxuriance. The quest for food is one requiring such little concern that the people have abundant leisure for the development of an extensive oral literature and elaborate ceremonials. These tribes are blanket Indians in more than one sense; they are clothed in blankets, and their property consists of stores of imported woolen blankets. A blanket is valued at fifty cents, which is also the conventional equivalent in Canadian money of the "skin," the standard of value of the Athabascans of the Far North.

Among the interesting conclusions reached in this paper may be mentioned the belief of the author that in the olden times the

¹ Boas, Franz. The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians. *Ann. Rept. U. S. Nat. Mus.*, 1895. Washington, Government Printing Office, 1897, pp. 311-738.

Kwakiutl lived in a series of village communities in which descent was reckoned in the male line. Each clan "developed a clan tradition which was founded on the acquisition of a manitou by the mythical ancestor, the manitou becoming heredity in the clan." This manitou became attenuated to a crest which no longer descended in the male line, but may be given in marriage so that it descends upon the daughter's children. The nobility includes only the heads of families who personate the mythical ancestor.

Dr. Boas declares that the custom of the potlatch, which has been frequently described, has been thoroughly misunderstood by most observers. "The underlying principle is that of the interest-bearing investment of property." Strenuous efforts are made to acquire a fortune by imposing loans which bear a ruinous rate of interest upon friends and thrusting them upon rivals.

The authentic record of the traditions and the detailed account of the ceremonies of the secret societies, with the native nomenclature, furnish valuable material for comparative studies and lay bare to us the thoughts of this group of aborigines. It is usually much easier to collect the totem post which stands before the door than to correctly record the myth which accounts for the character of that house post. Frequently the ritual is accounted for by several myths, and is therefore presumed to be older than the myths. The secret societies, by whom the rites are performed, are believed to have originated from the habits of warfare.

The work is profusely illustrated and many songs and texts are given.

The Graphic Art of the Eskimos.¹ — In an abundantly illustrated paper, Dr. Hoffman has described the graphic art of the Western Eskimos, and has shown that the Eskimos east of Point Barrow "exhibit but little artistic expression, this being chiefly confined to lines, dots, and other similar rudimentary markings which are employed almost wholly for decorative purposes." The evidence that has been accumulated proves pretty conclusively that the modern Eskimos of Western Alaska, among whom artistic expression in graphic delineation has reached its highest development, have learned to carve and etch with steel tools under the instruction of the Russians. This disposes of the theory which derives the Eskimos from the cave dwellers of Europe.

¹ Hoffman, W. J. The Graphic Art of the Eskimos. *Ann. Rept. U. S. Nat. Mus.*, 1895, pp. 739-968.